

diversify media ownership

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

FCC-commissioned studies do not accurately reflect the negative aspects that further consolidation could have on society as a whole. The recent war with Iraq is a prime example. Corporations with huge financial stakes in government contracts concerning the extinguishing of oil fires and the reconstruction of a sovereign nation also hold Orwellian control over media outlets. The right of the people to express their dissent with their government at wartime, including through fair and unbiased media coverage presenting differing viewpoints as equally valid, is severely limited by businesses -- not even the citizenry, but corporations -- whose financial interests are integral to their ethics and conduct as influential entities in our system of government. The media outlets available did not offer a fair and unbiased opportunity for those with legitimate and legal reasons for opposing the war to speak and be heard without being branded as something less than American.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. One founding father observed that it is the obligation of every patriot to protect his country from its government. The government is a servant of the people, and the people's voice MUST be heard. Business has no right to overturn the fundamental values of the citizenry for their own financial interests. It is precisely for this reason that the Thirteen Colonies broke away from the English: their economic interests threatened American rights. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process -- a process which ultimately belongs to the people.

Respectfully,
Anthony B. Annechino

